

Select Board

May 25, 2021

Remote meeting via telephone conference call

Present:

- Board of Selectmen: Mr. Joseph Fisher (Chair), Mr. Bill Ramsey, and Ms. Liz Klein
- Ms. Michelle Monsecur, Assistant Town Administrator

7:00 PM: Call to order

Mr. Fisher called the meeting to order and read the following statement:

"This meeting is being held remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to an Order issued by the Governor of Massachusetts dated March 12, 2020 Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify the chair at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the chair may inform all other participants of said recording. "

Mr. Fisher asked if any participants were recording the meeting. There were no responses.

Mr. Fisher also noted that the Select Board members who were participating remotely were himself, Joe Fisher, Chair, Bill Ramsey, and Liz Klein.

Mr. Fisher marked the one-year anniversary of the death of George Floyd with the following remarks:

Today is May 25, 2021. One year ago today, George Floyd was killed. This sad anniversary was marked at the White House and across the country.

President Joe Biden issued a statement today that concluded as follows:

"The battle for the soul of America has been a constant push and pull between the American ideal that we're all created equal and the harsh reality that racism has long torn us apart. At our best, the American ideal wins out. It must again."

Here in Massachusetts, our Attorney General, Maura Healey, issued the following statement:

"George Floyd should be alive today. Let this anniversary be a reminder to all of us to keep going, and to root out systemic racism wherever we find it."

I am confident that I speak for all members of the Select Board, including prior members as well as our newly elected member, when I say that racism has no place in Hingham, that each of us is committed, and that collectively this Board is committed, to affirming justice and equity for all.

Welcome and swear in new Select Board member

Town Clerk, Eileen McCracken, conducted a swearing in ceremony for newly elected Select Board member, Liz Klein.

Reorganize Board

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to nominate and appoint Joseph M. Fisher as Chair of the Select Board. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Proclamation for Town Clerk Eileen McCracken

Members of the Select Board read the following proclamation:

*“THE HINGHAM SELECT BOARD HEREBY ISSUES THIS PROCLAMATION
FOR THE EXCEPTIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF
EILEEN A. McCRACKEN*

Whereas, you, Eileen A. McCracken, Hingham Town Clerk for 24 years and Town employee for 34 years, have left an unforgettable legacy on the community through your remarkable record of service presiding over two dozen years of elections, including six presidential elections; and

Whereas, you successfully introduced ‘early voting’ to the Town of Hingham, and processed a record-setting number of early ballots for the Presidential Election in November 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic prompting residents to vote early either in-person or through the mail; and

Whereas, you have an unparalleled depth and breadth of knowledge of the Town of Hingham, and have handled your duties with grace and enthusiasm; and

Whereas, no matter the time of day or reason one stops into the Town Clerk’s office, you are patient, kind, extraordinarily helpful, and always have the best interests of the town at heart; and

Whereas, you so fittingly earned the distinction of being named Hingham’s Citizen of the Year for 2016 as you are the essence of this community; and

Whereas, you infuse life and vibrancy, sprinkled with a sense of humor, into our Town Hall that lifts the spirits of all who work and visit here. You have been the link to the past, present, and future of the Town of Hingham!

Now, therefore we, Joseph M. Fisher, William C. Ramsey, and Elizabeth F. Klein, Select Board of Hingham, proclaim our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for all you have done on behalf of this great Town, and we wish you and your family much happiness as you begin this new chapter in life.

Signed this twenty-fifth day of May 2021.”

Approval of minutes

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to approve the minutes dated May 14, 2021. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: abstain

Mr. Fisher: yes

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to approve the minutes dated May 18, 2021. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: abstain

Mr. Fisher: yes

To authorize the Chair to approve all bills, drafts, orders and payrolls on behalf of the Select Board pursuant to M.G.L. c. 41, § 56.

Ms. Monsegur and Mr. Fisher reviewed the process for approving bills, drafts, orders and payrolls.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to authorize the Chair to approve all bills, drafts, orders and payrolls on behalf of the Select Board pursuant to M.G.L. c. 41, § 56. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

To sign the contract with Shrewsbury Landscapes, Inc. for Athletic Field Turf Maintenance

Mr. Mark Thorell, Director of the Recreation Department, recommended that the Town sign a two-year contract with Shrewsbury Landscapes, Inc. for Athletic Field Turf Maintenance. Maintenance would include:

- All infield openings and mid-season clean-ups
- Fertilization protocol across all Town fields
- Aeration, topdressing, and over seeding,
- All field maintenance with the exception of irrigation, which will be addressed with a separate contract.

Mr. Thorell said that this contract would not exceed the Town Meeting appropriation for this purpose.

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the contract with Shrewsbury Landscapes, Inc. for Athletic Field Turf Maintenance in an amount not to exceed \$408,875.86. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

To sign the contract with East Coast Sealcoating, Inc. Plymouth River tennis court repair/resurfacing

Mr. Thorell explained that this contract would allow a vendor to resurface the tennis courts at Plymouth River School. Resurfacing would include filling the cracks, applying an adhesive and painting all six courts. Ms. Kathy Reilley added that the vendor's references were excellent.

Ms. Klein asked if they project would be complete before the start of school in the fall. Mr. Thorell expected the work to be completed within the last two weeks of August. Mr. Fisher asked who would be overseeing the work. Mr. Thorell advised that he would be overseeing the project.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the contract with East Coast Sealcoating, Inc. for Plymouth River tennis court repair/resurfacing in an amount not to exceed \$64,560.00.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Request from Hingham Girls Softball to install a shed on Carlson Field

Ms. Monsegur explained that Hingham Girls Softball is requesting to install a shed at Carlson Field, for the purpose of storing maintenance equipment and sports equipment. She reported that Emily Wentworth, Zoning Administrator, has reviewed the request and has noted that it complies with all Zoning rules.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion that the Board approve the installation by Hingham Girls Softball of a shed on Carlson Field in accordance with the specifications, and in the location, set forth in the submission received by the Select Board on May 19, 2021, at the sole cost and expense of Hingham Girls Softball, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Hingham Girls Softball is responsible for obtaining, and is hereby authorized to apply for, all necessary permits for the installation of the shed, and such installation shall be done in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations and permits.**
- 2. Upon installation, the shed shall become the property of the Town of Hingham and the Town hereby accepts said gift under M.G.L. c. 44, § 53A½. Said shed may from time to time be relocated or removed in the discretion of the Town.**
- 3. The shed shall be used by Hingham Girls Softball only for the storage of equipment for operation of the league which use shall not be exclusive. The Town shall have the right, upon notice to Hingham Girls Softball, to inspect the contents of the shed.**
- 4. All property kept within the shed shall be stored at Hingham Girls Softball's sole risk and the Town of Hingham shall have no responsibility or liability for the contents of the shed or any damage to the shed or its contents. Hingham Girls Softball shall be responsible for cleaning, maintaining, and repair the shed. Hingham Girls Softball will post a sign reflecting this information.**

Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Issuance of a Special (One-Day) Wine and Malt Beverages License to Kelly Griffin on behalf of Kate's Table for "Polly Thayer Starr: Spirit of Discovery" Opening Reception at Weir River Farm on Thursday, June 10, 2021.

Ms. Anne Smith-White, Trustees of the Reservation representative, 140 Turkey Hill Lane, explained that their event is an outdoor art opening with a reception for 75 people from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. She also noted that she has been in touch with HPD regarding traffic management. Ms. Monsegur reported that Police Chief Jones has reviewed both requests for Special One-Day Liquor Licenses for events at the Weir River Farm and had no issues with either.

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to approve the issuance of a Special (One-Day) Wine and Malt Beverages License to Kelly Griffin on behalf of Kate's Table for "Polly Thayer Starr: Spirit of Discovery" Opening Reception at Weir River Farm on Thursday, June 10, 2021 from 5 pm to 7 pm. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Issuance of a Special (One-Day) Wine and Malt Beverages License to Michael Snowdale on behalf of Stellwagen Beer Company for a Picnic at Weir River Farm on Thursday, June 17 and Thursday, June 24, 2021.

Ms. Anne White-Smith explained that this request is for the first two dates in a series of sunset picnics at the Weir River Farm. She reported that they will be selling 150 tickets for the events, which would also include a food truck and live music. She also noted that the request has been reviewed by the Board of Health and the Hingham Police Department.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to approve the issuance of a Special (One-Day) Wine and Malt Beverages License to Michael Snowdale on behalf of Stellwagen Beer Company for a Picnic at Weir River Farm on Thursday, June 17 and Thursday, June 24, 2021 from 4:30 pm to 9 pm. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Call for Talent Bank Applications

Mr. Fisher said that Hingham's Town Government is reliant of volunteers offering their time and expertise to various committees and boards. He invited residents to submit Talent Bank forms and

noted that the Town Moderator and the Select Board plan to interview candidates to serve on numerous Town boards and committees. Mr. Fisher expected the interview process to begin in mid-June. Mr. Ramsey encouraged residents to submit applications. Mr. Fisher said that the Board had a record number of applications last year. Mr. Fisher noted that the Talent Bank application can be found at <https://www.hingham-ma.gov/formcenter/select-board-15/talent-bank-application-66>.

COVID-19 Update

Ms. Monsegur gave the following report on the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic:

COVID-19 Data

As of today, confirmed COVID-19 cases in Massachusetts totaled 659,916. The 7-day average of new COVID-19 cases in the state has been trending downward since early April. The statewide positivity rate is down to 0.93% and the 7-day average of confirmed deaths from COVID-19 has dropped to 6.1 from a peak of around 175. According to public health data from the MA Department of Public Health (DPH) released last week, the Town's designation remains "green" for the second week in a row, indicating a "lower risk" of spread in the community. There have been 16 new cases of COVID-19 in Hingham over the past 14 days, and a total of 1,959 cases in Hingham since the start of the pandemic. The average daily incidence rate for the Town of Hingham dropped to 4.8 per 100,000 residents, and our percent positivity rate was 1.04% for the previous 14 days.

Vaccine Rollout

According to DPH's [daily COVID-19 vaccine report](#), nearly 3.5 million people in Massachusetts have been fully vaccinated as of today. Vermont, Connecticut, and Massachusetts continue to lead the way nationwide in terms of percent of the population that is fully vaccinated, [according to Johns Hopkins University](#). MA is currently over 47%. As of last week, over 54% of Hingham residents have been fully vaccinated.

COVID-19 Testing Center

Just a reminder that the mPathy COVID-19 testing center at 308 Cushing Street is now closed. If you find yourself in need of a COVID-19 test, tests are available at CVS locations in Hingham, Weymouth, and Norwell; Walgreens locations in Weymouth and Rockland; and the CareWell Urgent Care Center in Norwell, among other places.

Reopening

All remaining COVID-19 restrictions are set to be lifted this Saturday, May 29th, which means that all industries will be permitted to open, all industry restrictions will be lifted, capacity will increase to 100%, and the state's gathering limit will be rescinded. Face coverings will still be mandatory for all individuals on public and private transportation systems, in healthcare facilities, and in other settings hosting vulnerable populations, such as congregate care settings. Non-vaccinated individuals are advised to continue wearing face masks and practice social distancing to help protect themselves and others from COVID-19. Locally, Town Hall and the Senior Center will return to full in-person staffing next Tuesday, June 1st. We anticipate reopening the building to the public shortly thereafter. The Hingham Public Library will reopen to the public beginning on June 1st. Hours will be Monday through Thursday from 9am to 5pm and Saturdays from 9am to 5pm with no capacity or time limit restrictions. Evening hours and in-person programming will resume at later dates. Please visit the Library's website for more details.

Governor Baker also announced plans to end the State of Emergency on June 15th. However, today, the Governor filed legislation to extend certain emergency measures that are set to expire on June 15 when the State of Emergency will be rescinded. The bill he filed will extend provisions related to the Open Meeting Law until September 1, 2021, which will allow additional time for the state to consider possible permanent changes to the Open Meeting Law to provide for greater flexibility in conducting open meetings through platforms like Zoom. The bill will also grant municipalities authority to extend special permits for restaurants offering outdoor dining issued under the State of Emergency through November 29, 2021. Finally, the bill will also extend a protection that prohibits medical providers from billing patients who have received COVID-related emergency and inpatient services for charges in excess of costs paid by their insurers. As filed, the protection would extend until January 1, 2022.”

Mr. Ramsey noted that he was happy that the outdoor dining permitting had been extended and said that many Hingham restaurant owners have expressed an interest in making their outdoor dining areas permanent. Ms. Monsegur said that some related guidance would be made available to restaurant owners who would be interested in more permanent outdoor seating options.

Public Comment

Mr. Fisher read the following statement regarding the Public Comment period:

“The Hingham Select Board encourages community engagement and welcomes questions and comments as agenda items are discussed at the meeting. In addition, we have set aside up to fifteen minutes for public comment for items that fall under the purview of the Select Board and are not already on tonight’s agenda. If any guests wish to speak, please seek to be recognized. Once recognized, state your name and address and address your comments to the Chair. Comments will be limited to three minutes per speaker and must relate to topics within the scope of the responsibilities of the Select Board. Speakers are encouraged to present their remarks in a respectful manner and not to indulge in personalities. The Public Comment period is not a time for debate by members of the Select Board. The Select Board is not adopting or endorsing any of the comments made during the Public Comment period.”

There were no comments from the public.

Town Administrator/Select Board Reports

Ms. Monsegur reported that the Fourth of July Parade would be allowed to be held because the Governor has lifted all Covid restrictions. The parade is scheduled for Sunday, July 4, 2021 around 10:00 am.

Mr. Ramsey welcomed and congratulated Ms. Klein. Mr. Ramsey recognized the hard work of all the candidates who ran in and won the recent election.

Ms. Klein said that she was excited to serve the town in her new capacity as Select Board member.

Mr. Fisher reported that the Select Board and Moderator would be meeting in early June to conduct talent bank interviews, and that, in addition to such interview meetings, the Select Board is scheduled to meet on Tuesday, June 8, 2021.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Documents: A complete meeting packet of supporting documentation is on file and available for public review in the Board of Selectmen's office